



The President's Daily Brief

6 FEB 1972

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LAOS

Government units attempting to maintain a foothold on the western approaches to the Bolovens Plateau are still being pushed back by the Communists. On 4 February, two Lao Army battalions abandoned their forward positions on Route 23, about two miles west of Ban Gnik. The battalion commanders reported receiving heavy weapons fire and being surrounded by an unidentified enemy force before leaving their posts.

The loss of these positions narrows the distance between Communist-held territory and the key river town of Pakse to 15 miles. It remains unlikely, however, that the enemy has serious designs on Pakse. The Communists appear to be widening their margin of protection for the Bolovens and can be expected to continue to do so. Their immediate objective may be the road junction of Routes 23 and 231, about 3-4 miles further to the west.

[REDACTED]

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CYPRUS

A shipment of small arms and ammunition arrived from
Czechoslovakia in late January. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] President Makarios plans to use most of the
weapons to form a 2,000-man paramilitary force personally
loyal to him in order to counter what he views as a
threat from General Grivas' supporters.

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Press accounts of the shipment have stirred sharp
responses from Athens and Ankara. The Greek Government
quickly protested to Makarios, and yesterday Turkey issued
a public statement promising to protect the rights of the
Turkish Cypriots. Turkish Foreign Minister Bayulken told
Ambassador Handley that because the new Czech shipment
might eventually be used against Turkish Cypriots, Ankara
might consider sending arms to them.

*Adverse reaction to the arms shipment could
disrupt recent progress toward resuming the inter-
communal talks. Even while expressing his dismay
at that development, however, Bayulken told
Ambassador Handley that he hoped the talks could
begin by the end of February.*

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